

VZCZCXRO2067  
PP RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHJA #1881 2830856  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 090856Z OCT 08  
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0287  
INFO RUEHJS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5470  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1353  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1324  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 4032  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4989  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2582  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3147  
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 0235  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 3010  
RUEHBA/AMCONSUL PERTH 1185  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 001881

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/09/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: GOI--IN JAVANESE CONFLICT AVOIDANCE MODE--EXTENDS  
SULTAN'S TERM AS YOGYAKARTA GOVERNOR

REF: A. (07) JAKARTA 2474

[1](#)B. (07) JAKARTA 2329

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L .Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: President Yudhoyono has signed a decree extending the term of the Sultan of Yogyakarta as governor by three years. The term otherwise would have expired on October 9. At the heart of the debate, is the fate of Yogyakarta as a special administrative district and historic Sultanate. In extending the term, the GOI was in pure Javanese conflict avoidance mode, clearly bowing to pressure not to end the term of a popular governor who is also a candidate for president. END SUMMARY.

THREE MORE YEARS

[1](#)2. (SBU) After some debate, the GOI has decided to extend the term of Yogyakarta's governor. Based on existing regulations, Sultan Hamengkubuwono's term as Governor of the Special Regional Province of Yogyakarta would have officially ended on October 8. Immediately following an October 7 meeting with the Sultan, however, President Yudhoyono signed a decree extending the Sultan's term in office by three years, Home Affairs Minister Mardiyanto announced. (Note: For historical reasons, Yogyakarta is officially a Sultanate--the only one so recognized in Indonesia--and the Sultan's family has special rights, including the right to serve as governor in renewable terms. The region--which is located in central Java--has about four million residents.)

A SULTAN OF THE PEOPLE

[1](#)3. (SBU) The Sultan is a popular figure and his subjects pressed hard for the renewal of his term. Large crowds demonstrated peacefully on October 6, demanding that the Sultan and his Deputy, Paku Alam IX, remain in office. Although neither the Sultan nor his Deputy were there, protesters symbolically installed them in office in a mock ceremony. Local political leaders urged that the Yogyakarta governor and deputy governor positions remain with the current royal families and that they be appointed for life.

YOGYAKARTA -- SPECIAL, OR JUST ANOTHER PROVINCE?

¶4. (SBU) The debate of what to do about Yogyakarta is not going away. A bill currently being deliberated by the Parliament would alter the governance of Yogyakarta, making it more like other provinces. A current national law enacted in 1950 dictates that the Sultan serve--as mentioned--as governor for renewable terms (ref A). The proposed legislation, if passed, would stipulate that Yogyakarta be governed by elected officials (like everywhere else) but retain a measure of power within the system for the Sultan and Paku Alam. It would, for example, give the Sultan virtual veto power over gubernatorial candidates and control over local land and cultural practices, and he could run for governor. It is not clear when this bill might be acted on.

#### CONFLICT AVOIDANCE

¶5. (C) According to some observers, legislative efforts to make the situation in Yogyakarta more democratic by electing the governor, for example, fits in better with the ethos of the new democratic Indonesia. The government seemed to favor that approach initially. That said, in extending the term, the GOI was in Javanese conflict avoidance mode, clearly bowing to pressure from Yogyakarta not to hamstring a popular governor who is also a candidate for president. Although quite popular at the local level, the Sultan--who by most standards is not particularly charismatic--has not climbed in the polls as a presidential candidate.

HUME